Reporter's Research

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Sirhan Theory: Hypnotized

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In the last chapter of "R. F. K. Must Die," the white history of the Robert F. Kennedy assassination, Robert Blair Kaiser alludes to "a shadowy conspiracy" who might have hypnotically programmed Sirhan B. Sirhan to kill Kennedy.

A News Analysis

A few weeks ago Kaiser received certain information which provided the missing link in his "Manchurian Candidate" theory. The information came from one of the assistance sleuths who worked with him on the book. Now Kaiser says he has certain clinical leads he knows, [illegible] somewhat [illegible] by telling a [illegible] Kennedy assassination [illegible] from the [illegible]

Sirhan in moments after the shooting of Robert Kennedy — researcher believes he was programmed to kill.

three times a week during the pre-trial and trial periods; he sat in with the defense attorneys; he witnessed the psychiatric examinations; he questioned Sirhan's family and friends; he had complete access to the police and F.B.I. reports; and he conducted an unrelenting private investigation of his own. So when Kaiser tells you that Sirhan did not act alone, you listen.

OUTLANDISH

Although the "Manchurian Candidate" theory seems outlandish, it is not far removed from the opinion of Dr. Bernard L. Diamond, the chief defense psychiatrist. Dr. Diamond came to believe that Sirhan was indeed programmed — but that he programmed himself through the occult art of automatic writing. (Thus explaining the notebook repetitions — "R.F.K. must die . . .")

Diamond's programming theory would account for Sirhan's failure to remember the actual killing except under hypnosis, his inability to recall the motive for his crime or why he chose to fire point-blank instead of from some distance which would have allowed for escape.

Sirhan would never tell where he was on June 3, the day before the assassination. However, he divulged that he had put 350 miles on his car that day — the exact round-trip distance between his home in Pasadena and San Diego. Kennedy was scheduled to be in San Diego on June 5.

This and reports of Sirhan's presence at other Kennedy appearances suggest to Kaiser that Sirhan was stalking Kennedy for two weeks and that his trance on assassination night was not, as Dr. Diamond held, just a spontaneous reaction to the drinks, bright lights and mirrors of the Ambassador Hotel.

Kaiser found heavier support for the existence of a programmer in Dr. Diamond's hypnotic sessions [illegible]

him to forget that he was programmed. Dr. Diamond had performed this simple hypnotic feat on Sirhan twice. To prove that others could have control over his body, Dr. Diamond hypnotized Sirhan in one experiment and told him to climb the bars of his cell like a monkey and then forget the origin of the command. Sirhan did as he was told and could not remember the reason for his action.

PROGRAMMED

This experiment was not lost on Kaiser who undertook to unravel a real-life "Manchurian Candidate" scenario. Twenty years ago in Denmark, a man was programmed by a friend to go into a trance at the sight of the letter X, rob a bank and kill if anyone got in his way. After a year of intense psychiatric observation, the locking mechanism in the victim's mind was cracked and the bizarre crime solved. Such things do occur.

I think I triggered Kaiser's revelations, which do not appear in his book, by asking in an interview about a radio report concerning his offer of conspiracy information to the F.B.I. The report referred to a letter Kaiser had written some time ago to J. Edgar Hoover, urging that he and the F.B.I. compare notes on their separate investigations of the Kennedy assassination. Hoover declined, Kaiser says.

Supposing that I somehow knew about his latest information, Kaiser decided to open up a bit regarding the "shadowy someone" he had recently unearthed.

* * *

Q. How did you feel when you finished the book?

A. I was upset by the fact that I hadn't cracked the case, that I hadn't found the co-conspirators.

Q. Why were you so convinced there were co-conspirators?

A. Because I felt the F.B.I. was doing a lousy job of investigation. But he didn't see the F.B.I. reports. All he had to go on was the fact that the co-conspirators haven't been brought to bay and that's the reason he thinks it's a bad job.

Q. But if he were programmed by someone else, wouldn't the programmer have programmed him, right out of Sirhan's mind? Would co-conspirators allow him to remember their identity?

A. That's a tough question and all I can do is fall back on the case in Denmark. The friend did not erase the X out of the victim's mind, he only blocked the programming out. Say I have been programmed by a friend to kill and to forget that I have been programmed. My friend cannot program our associa-

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tion out of existence. Not only do I know that I know him, but my other friends know that I know him. What my friend did was program me to forget that he programmed me, and programmed me to remember that he is always my friend and never to betray him. This was the big hang-up in Denmark. I believe that there are persons — one particular person who might have programmed him, but Sirhan doesn't want to get into that. (Dr.) Diamond didn't like my theory, but if I had found my programmer during the trial I think he would have gone along with me.

Q. Is there evidence in the book that leads directly to

I got only a touchy subject you're going to go off it all the time. Sirhan always went to sleep under hypnosis when we spoke about the involvement of others. When the prosecution psychiatrist questioned Sirhan, he received not a single answer during the 45-minute session. That's a locking mechanism. Furthermore, a deflecting mechanism may be working even in the awake state. If you ask Sirhan a direct question about his movements on June 3, he's off in a June 4.

* * *

Q. So you're pretty sure of the programmer?

A. I think I know who the programmer is. But there's a lot more work to be done. I'm not saying I absolutely know who the programmer is. I just have some very strong reasons.

Q. And this is the person Sirhan should have mentioned and didn't?

A. Right.

Q. And this person is not in the book?

A. No.

Q. Would you say that all of the suspicious characters in the book then are innocent?

A. Edward van Antwerp (who mysteriously disappeared for two weeks after the assassination and who denied knowing Sirhan even though he had roomed with him for five months). I don't think he's a co-conspirator but I think there's something he could tell us.

Q. When did you find out about this programmer?

A. Early October.

Q. How?

A. My own contribution was minimal. Everything just fell into place. I've got some investigator friends who are pressing this thing in L.A. I'm sort of their chief inventor and they bounce things off me.

Q. So you put the pieces together?

A. Yes.

Q. Your friends don't know then that they identified the programmer to you?

A. No.

Q. Is this person being watched?

A. No. I have neither the time nor the money to do that.

Q. Have you met this person?

A. No. I'm really skittish about getting into this and playing guessing games.

Q. Couldn't this person just split?

A. Yes, that's what I'm afraid of. I don't want to be too specific. All he has to do is read this — although he has no way of knowing how close I am to him. I'm not going to say any more.

Q. Are you afraid you will be accused of inventing this story for publicity's sake?

A. Sure. And I don't know what to do about it. Either you go out and promote your book or it dies, especially with a book like this which has so much going against it — all the previous assassination books and conspiracy theories and authors going around trying to hype-up sales. Furthermore, there is the depressing nature of the whole thing and what it adds up to.

If the evidence I have means what I think it means, there is a killer still at large, maybe allied with another person, and no candidate who threatens the status quo is safe.

Is Robert Blair Kaiser to be believed? Circumstantial evidence would indicate a publicity campaign for his book. As the author himself said, it's a bad season for assassination books.

Kaiser's period in Jerusalem